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Town Meeting



BULLETIN OF AMERICA'S TOWN MEETING OF THE AIR

BROADCAST BY STATIONS OF THE AMERICAN BROADCASTING CO.



Universal Military Training Necessary for Our Security?

Moderator, GEORGE V. DENNY, JR.

Speakers

GEORGE FIELDING ELIOT

NORMAN THOMAS

JOHN M. DEVINE

LEIF ERICKSON

(See also page 12)

COMING

—July 24, 1947—

Can We Have an Effective World Organization
Without Russia?

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THE BROADCAST OF JULY 24:

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GEORGE V. DENNY, JR., MODERATOR



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Is Universal Military Training Necessary for Our Security?

Announcer:

Tonight your Town Meeting is the guest of the University of Utah, Station KUTA, and the Utah Centennial Commission. Next week marks the one hundredth anniversary of the settlement of this country by the Mormons, under the leadership of Brigham Young. A caravan composed of the exact number of pioneers to reach this beautiful valley in July 24, 1847, is now on its way to this city to arrive here next Tuesday.

They were a courageous people, with abiding faith in the principles of their religion, and they suffered all manner of hardships in order to reach their goal. Have we faith in our principles today, to face up to the harsh realities of this modern wilderness of unsolved problems?

The first step on the road to certain defeat is for us to turn away from them. We are the rich-

est, most productive, most powerful nation in the world, and we are the best informed. Hence, Town Hall and the American Broadcasting Company, urge you to join us this week and every week as we consider a problem of grave concern to all of us.

And now we present our moderator, the President of Town Hall, New York, and founder of America's Town Meeting of the Air, Mr. George V. Denny, Jr. Mr. Denny. (*Applause.*)

Moderator Denny:

Good evening, neighbors. We're delighted to be here at Salt Lake City tonight and join in the centennial celebration of the settlement of this great state of Utah by the members of the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-day Saints, otherwise known as the Mormons.

Salt Lake City is full of gentlemen who have grown beards es-

pecially for this occasion. Instead of giving encyclopedias for tonight's best question it looks like we should give out razors. (*Laughter.*)

This hospitable city will be the host this year to a number of important national events, and I'm sure that you, our listeners, will be glad to join with this fine audience here in Kingsbury Hall on the campus of the University of Utah to discuss a question on which we, the people of the United States, appear to be sharply divided.

Is universal military training now necessary for our security? What's happened to all the fine promises made by our statesmen at San Francisco? In one breath we are told we must have faith in the United Nations, and in the next we are told that we must rely on military force.

We're asked to give money and food for relief and rehabilitation to totalitarian nations. At the same time, we are told we must be prepared to fight them. No wonder our people are bewildered and confused.

We've discussed this particular subject twice before on Town Meeting, but it is made urgent and timely now on account of the Report of the President's Advisory committee on Universal Military Training, made public on May 29, which specifically recommended, among five other things, a pro-

gram of Universal Military Training. This Committee is composed of nine representative Americans headed by Dr. Karl T. Compton. Their recommendations are worth the most serious consideration of the American people.

In order to give you both sides of this question, your Town Meeting brings you the counsel of four eminently qualified authorities: Major George Fielding Eliot, New Zealand man Thomas, Brigadier General John M. Devine, and Judge Leif Erickson, about whom I will tell you more as I introduce each one of them.

Now, we'll hear first from Major George Fielding Eliot, one of the best-known military analysts in the air and in the press, a graduate of Melbourne University, Australia, who served as a captain and later as a major in the Military Intelligence Reserve of the United States Army. Since then he has written a number of books about our national defense, the latest being *The Strength We Need*. Major George Fielding Eliot is speaking to us from New York. (*Applause.*)

Major Eliot:

There seems to be an idea in the minds of some people that the purpose of universal military training is to raise "mass armies." Having said this, they then conclude loudly that mass armies are quite useless to resist atomic bombs.

I've heard my friend, Norman Thomas, who is sitting here in the ABC studio in New York with me, talk about mass armies on his general line.

But the purpose of Universal Military Training under the present design is not to raise mass armies at all. It is to provide a reserve of reasonably trained man power to be in readiness to defend this nation in case of need, whether in the Army, the Navy, in the Air Force, in local defense, or for whatever purpose disciplined men may be required.

The need for man power in war has increased enormously with the progress of mechanical and scientific inventions. The modern industrial state needs more man power and is capable of supporting a far greater population than the pastoral, or agricultural, or handicraft communities of old.

And just so, that modern armed force, which makes use of every branch of industry, requires far more man power to serve, maintain, and transport its incredibly complicated equipment than did the bow-and-arrow armies of the ancients, or the musket-carrying legions of the early days of this republic.

It is fashionable nowadays, I know, to say that the next war will be fought by a few high-sommed professors toying with a row of push-buttons in a concrete dugout. If my colleague, General

Devine, out there in Salt Lake City, will forgive me for introducing a naval example, this is no more true than to say that a battleship is fought by the fire control officer who presses a button in the director tower and actually fires nine 16-inch guns all at once.

You have to take into account the 1500 officers and men who man these guns, provide anti-aircraft defense, and look after such vital matters as the handling of the ship, the engine, communications, radar watch, repairing damages, treating the wounded, ammunition supplies, cooking, and all the rest of the jobs that have to be done in order to operate and fight a battleship.

Every one of those 1500 jobs demands a trained man. If any one of those jobs is neglected, the efficiency of the whole ship will suffer. The ship strikes her heaviest blows when that fire control officer presses his little button, but in order that he may press it at the right time and the right place, and with the right results, all the other 1500 men must have done their work properly.

It's just the same with any kind of armed force. Thus when a fighter plane takes off, it isn't just the pilot that counts. It's the maintenance crew which has worked all night to get the plane in condition; the weathermen, who know what weather the plane will meet in the

area where it's going; the communications crew, who keep contact with it so that it can work effectively with other planes; the ordnance people who check its guns, provide the ammunition; even the mess cook, who gives the pilot his breakfast, and the orderly who wakes him in time for his flight, to say nothing of the doctor who keeps him in proper physical trim, and chases him off to a rest camp if he isn't up to his work.

If any of these fail, the pilot and the plane either fail altogether, or they function less efficiently.

So when your professors push their buttons, if we ever have a war in which high-powered weapons are released by such means, they will simply be part of a huge team which services, handles, supplies and checks the weapons they'll be using. It is safe to say on the record of all experience, that the more powerful and complicated these weapons are, the more man power they will need. It has always been so.

The one great difference between the next war, if it ever comes, and the wars of the past, is this: that we will not have time to do our training after the war begins. It will strike with terrible swiftness. We shall need our trained men right away. That means that we will not have them at all, when we need them, unless we train them in time of peace.

But, I have heard it argued, are

we to find these partly-trained boys of real value in the terrible test of war? Won't it take another six months or a year to whip them into shape?

Those who argue in this fashion see only part of the picture. We shall have men at various degrees of training. We shall have fully trained men of the Regular Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps. We shall have the almost fully trained men of the National Guard and the Air Force and Naval Reserve. And we shall have the partly-trained young men who have passed through the U.S. military system.

The moment war begins, regular units will need replacements to expand them to victory, strength and to replace casualties. The National Guard and Reserves will need more men, too. Partly-trained men can fill the gaps in fully trained units. But lacking these, all the units will soon wear away under the first blows of war.

We should have more of the fully trained people? Yes—but we can never have enough; the budget won't stand it. Peacetime training for all, in full or in part, is the only acceptable answer—until the time comes when a reign of compulsory law can make us all trained throughout the world. Until that day, which, alas, now seems far off, our security depends on our own ability to maintain it.

we are thoroughly ready to do just that, we shall be the less likely to be put to the test.

Twice in my lifetime, a weak America has been attacked by a foe who thought we were too weak to defend ourselves. The first lesson cost us 50,000 dead; the second cost us 300,000 dead. Who knows what the price of the third lesson will be—if we are fools enough not to heed the other two? (*Applause.*)

Moderator Denny:

Thank you, Major George Fielding Eliot. Now our second speaker is an old friend of Town Hall audiences. Mr. Norman Thomas, outstanding leader of the American Socialist Party, and his party's candidate for President in the last five national elections. He's also the author of a great many books, the latest being *Appeal to the Nations*. We are happy to present Mr. Norman Thomas, speaking to us from New York. (*Applause.*)

Mr. Thomas:

Once more we Americans are discussing the adoption of that peacetime conscription which never prevented any war, never guaranteed victory, and contributed mightily to the coming of the totalitarian state.

The "peace-loving" victors in total war already are spending ten billion dollars more on arms, taken out of the mouths of hungry children, than the world spent in 1938

when the Fascist power was rampant, to which we are asked to add from \$1,750,000,000 to 5 billion dollars as a first installment in training our sons how to win the last war—something very different from the next; the first installment, because the ink will scarcely be dry on this law before a drive will be begun for a stern measure making our sons subject to service all over the world.

The present bill is only the camel's nose under the tent. If its advocates are right in the arguments they use, then they (and I include Major Eliot and General Devine) are trying to fool themselves, or more probably, us, by this "nice Nellie" measure which they advocate.

It's a familiar story but this time with a profound difference. What I have said every time I have appeared against peacetime military conscription, and what was always piously and insincerely denied by my opponents, is now universally admitted:

The present proposals have no meaning, still less any chance of passage, except for war against Russia, a war begun in Europe or Asia, within the next five to ten years. On no other basis does the report of the President's Advisory Commission make sense. That is the basis, tacitly accepted, if not openly, in Washington.

The President's Commission, which was a sounding board for

the War Department, argues that it will be some years before any other nation than ourselves—they mean Russia—will be able to use atomic bombs. They argue that within that period, pending further work on rockets, etc., we shall still need mass armies, which will be more easily made ready by universal military training.

Hanson Baldwin, in the July *Readers' Digest*, and Colonel Roscoe S. Conkling, high in selective service in the two wars, in a recent pamphlet give powerful military arguments against this theory. Remembering the overwhelming superiority of our navy, and probably of our air force, it is fantastically improbable that within the next decade Russia can bring to our shores the kind of war that needs mass armies.

We shall be training men at great expense, because we expect to use them to supplement atomic warfare against Russia—a war begun, I repeat, in Europe or Asia, quite likely to support such dubious democracies as Turkey or Chiang Kai-Shek's China. No one seriously believes that Stalin, who apparently is little alarmed by our atom bombs and our enormous industrial superiority, is going to be frightened into peace by an expensive multiplication of Fort Knox training camps.

In mass armies, Russia's population, climate, and strategic position—ask the ghosts of Napoleon

and Hitler—will always give superiority. Military training not be to avert war, but in desperate hope of winning a which will mean universal ruin.

The alternative is not peace appeasement. I was opposing from Teheran on, while most the present supporters of peacetime military conscription were applauding it. We shall not back what was unnecessarily by wasting billions on military conscription at the expense of proper development and application of the Marshall Plan.

Our riches are not inexhaustible and we have to make choices. Such is the nature of future that our only positive hope lies in avoiding it. Total victory in last two wars left a Europe worse off than in 1914. The total war will make Communism or Fascists out of its miserable survivors even in America.

Peacetime conscription, in economic expense, the vested interests it will create, the curio-blended psychology of false confidence, suspicion, and hate which it will increase, its paralysis of constructive thinking, will contribute far more to the probability of war than to any victory in

Once more I plead for our hope, an American appeal, such has never yet been made, for universal disarmament under effective international control, or for world government. To rush

an expensive and futile conscription before making that appeal is to come perilously near to throwing away the world's last hope. (*Applause.*)

Moderator Denny:

Thank you, Norman Thomas. Now we'll hear from the man who is actually the head of the Universal Military Training Experimental Unit at Fort Knox—Brigadier General John M. Devine, who recently completed the training of the first contingent of young men under this program.

General Devine is a graduate of West Point, and has had a distinguished military career, which was climaxed when he commanded the Eighth Armored Division in the European theater in World War II as a major general. I am happy to present to Town Meeting listeners, General Devine. (*Applause.*)

General Devine:

Major Eliot has dealt with the fallacious notion of mass armies in a push-button warfare, and has shown that the real purpose of universal military training is national security.

Mr. Norman Thomas now suggests universal disarmament as a road to peace. It's a magnificent idea. I approve of it. But we are not in a position to advocate such a step effectively, because we have nothing to bargain with.

Remember that fox who lost his tail and advocated the abolition

of all tails for all foxes? He was not successful for the same reason.

You remember, Mr. Thomas, we took the lead in disarmament back in 1922, and we had something to sacrifice then.

And in 1928 we were ardent supporters of the Kellogg Anti-War Pact. In 1935 we passed hopeful neutrality legislation, designed to keep us out of war, and what do we get? We get Pearl Harbor, and the most devastating war in history.

It cost us three hundred billion dollars and three hundred thousand men to learn that lesson. The time for wishful thinking is passed. The program of Universal Military Training might not have prevented the last war, but then again it might.

I agree with you, however, Mr. Thomas, that there can be no victor in modern war, but there certainly can be a loser. The test which confronts us is to prevent another war, if that is humanly possible, but at the same time be ready to meet it, should our peace efforts fail.

We believe in the United Nations. We have committed ourselves to a position of leadership in building that organization into an effective instrument for peace. At the same time, we have allowed our military strength to deteriorate. Our influence at the international conference table has deteriorated with it.

Those national leaders who stand in the forefront of the struggle for a better world order are firm in their belief that universal military training is necessary for our salvation. Mr. Byrnes advocated it, General Marshall urges it. Mr. Warren Austin, our representative on the United Nations Council, pleads for it. Why? Because the adoption of universal military training by the United States would serve notice to the world that we mean what we say; that we have the will and the ability to support the doctrines we believe in.

It would inspire confidence among peace-loving peoples in the future of the United Nations, and give new hope that a reign of law throughout the world might be achieved.

That was a beautiful sentiment, Mr. Thomas, lining up the people who love peace. Will we invite Czechoslovakia to such a formation? or Poland? or the Baltic states? Will they accept our invitation to fall in line with the other peace-loving nations? If not, why not?

Let's be realistic, and at the same time retain our ideals. Our influence is waning because in a world of power politics we have let our power slip away. Our plans for universal military training will restore it.

Now the Compton Commission, as Mr. Denny has stated and which

Mr. Thomas calls a sound board for President Truman, was composed of nine outstanding individuals, all leaders in their field. For six months they studied the question of national security. At the end of that time they reached the unanimous conclusion that Universal Military Training, and quote "Is an essential element in an integrated program of national security, designed to protect the United States against possible aggression, to perpetuate the freedoms for which millions have shed their blood, and to hasten the advent of universal disarmament and peace through the United Nations." This is a realistic solution.

Only yesterday here in Salt Lake City the Governors Convention likewise endorsed Universal Military Training as being necessary for our safety.

At Fort Knox, Kentucky, which is my own home station, for the past six months there has been training an experimental battalion of teen-age Americans. These boys are, as nearly as possible, typical of the young men who would receive training under a national program. The purpose of this unit was to provide a sample, to build a pilot model of Universal Military Training; to show interested people what military training is really like; to answer the objections and to remove the fears of those honest people who are concerned lest such training be harmful to their youth.

men; to demonstrate that such training, far from being harmful, is beneficial to the average young American.

There can be no doubt of the success of this experiment. Literally thousands of people, many skeptical, some hostile, visited Fort Knox and inspected this unit. Almost without exception these visitors agree that the type of training proposed by the War Department as demonstrated at Fort Knox will turn out better men and better citizens while at the same time developing well trained and well disciplined soldiers.

We do not look upon Universal Military Training as a method of preparing cannon fodder for the next war, but as a program for developing our potential strength to the point where our influence will be effective in preventing war.

Universal Military Training is a democratic plan for peace, and when and if it is adopted by the United States as a national policy, liberty-loving peoples around the world will celebrate. Faith and hope will be reborn. (*Applause.*)

Moderator Denny:

Thank you, General Devine. Now our fourth speaker, Judge Leif Erickson, is a native of Wisconsin who moved to Montana at an early age, trained for the law at the University of Chicago, returned to Montana for a distinguished career of public service.

At the age of 32 he was elected to the Montana Supreme Court. In 1946 he defeated Senator Burton K. Wheeler for the Democratic nomination for United States Senator, but lost to his Republican opponent at the general election. Welcome to Town Meeting, Judge Leif Erickson. (*Applause.*)

Judge Erickson:

Since 1776 America has rejected universal military training in peacetime as a national policy. Now in the age of the atom bomb and the guided missile, General Devine and Major Eliot would have us, at a cost of three billions a year or more, and in the name of national security, force every 18-year-old boy to spend a year of his life as a conscript soldier.

When the atom bomb dropped at Hiroshima, every able-bodied man there had spent a year as a conscript in Hirohito's army. Of what value was that to him or to the people of the city when in a matter of minutes Hiroshima was leveled and 50,000 inhabitants were maimed or killed?

That bomb alone is sufficient answer to the argument that national security is to be found now behind a wall of men. The only military defense against the atom bomb, guided missiles, and bacteriological warfare is to be found in an immediate paralyzing counter-attack with the same or better weapons.

We can only mount such an attack with an army, navy, and air force made up of intensively trained teams of men, with a specialist on every job, from greas-

ing the plane to dropping to bomb itself. These teams can only be trained in a highly specialized regular army of well-paid experts. Peacetime conscription will not

THE SPEAKERS' COLUMN

GEORGE FIELDING ELIOT—One of the best known military analysts either on the air or in the press is George Fielding Eliot. Major Eliot was born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1894. After his graduation from Melbourne University in Australia, he served with the Australian Imperial Force from 1914 to 1918. From 1922 until 1930 he served as a captain and later as a major in the Military Intelligence Reserve of the United States Army.

After five years as an accountant in Kansas City, Missouri, Major Eliot began writing for fiction magazines in 1926. Since 1928 he has written especially on military and international affairs and on military defense. At present he is military analyst for the New York *Herald Tribune* and for the Columbia Broadcasting System.

Major Eliot's books include *If War Comes*; *The Ramparts We Watch*; *Bombs Bursting in Air*; *Hour of Triumph*; and *The Strength We Need*.

JOHN M. DEVINE — Brigadier General John M. Devine was born in Providence, Rhode Island on June 18, 1895. He was graduated from the U.S. Military Academy on April 20, 1917, and commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the Field Artillery. In 1922, he received a degree of Master of Sciences in Communications Engineering from Yale University.

General Devine has spent the majority of the period between wars as a teacher, both at West Point and at the Field Artillery School, Fort Sill, Oklahoma. Among other assignments, he was Assistant Professor of English at the Military Academy in 1932, and in 1938, Professor of Military Science and Tactics at Yale.

He commanded the Eighth Armored Division in the European Theater during World War II as a Major General. In October, 1946, he was appointed Commanding General of the Army Ground Forces Universal Military Training Experimental Unit at Fort Knox, Kentucky. He has been decorated by the United States Government and by four foreign governments.

NORMAN THOMAS — Best known of American Socialists, Norman Thomas was the candidate of his party for President in 1928, 1932, 1936, 1940, and 1944.

Born in Ohio, he received an A.B. degree at Princeton and a B.D. at Union Theological Seminary. Following his ordination as a Presbyterian minister in 1911, he served in several New York City churches until 1931, when he demitted the ministry.

In 1918, Mr. Thomas founded the *World Tomorrow*, which he edited for three years. His success with this publication led him in 1921 to become editor for one year of *The Nation*.

Mr. Thomas is chairman of the executive committee of the Postwar World Council. He is the author of many magazine articles and numerous books. Among his books are *The Conscientious Objector in America*, later reprinted under the title, *Is Conscience a Crime?*; *America's Way Out—A Program for Democracy*; *As I See It* (with Paul Blanchard); *War—No Profit, No Glory, No Need*; *Socialism on the Defensive*; and *We Have a Future*.

LEIF ERICKSON—A practicing attorney at Helena, Montana, and former member of the Montana Supreme Court, Leif Erickson was born July 29, 1906, at Gashton, Wisconsin. He came to Sidney, Montana, at the age of eleven, graduated from Sidney High School, and was employed teaching school for a couple of years. He attended the University of North Dakota one year and then enrolled at the University of Chicago, where he took his Ph.D. in 1931 and his J.D. from Law School in 1934. In 1934, he started practicing law at Sidney.

He was elected county attorney of Richland County in 1936, and in 1938 was elected a member of the Supreme Court of Montana, on which he served for six years. He has been a leader in the liberal section of the Democratic party in his state and in the Northwest.

Judge Erickson served as a public member of the National War Labor Board, and as referee and emergency board member, on a number of occasions. He is a member of the Americans for Democratic Action, the Farmers Education and Co-operative Union of America, and was first chairman of the Regional Committee for a Missouri Valley Authority. He is the author of a number of articles in law reviews.

provide the specialists for those teams, and I say in reply to Major Eliot that a year's forced training, or six months, if you please, will only prepare men for service in a mass army.

The product of that training would serve Napoleon well at Waterloo, but not give us the specialists that we need now. Peacetime conscription will not insure national security; and more than that, I believe peacetime universal military training is a real threat to national security.

It is said that the ostrich, when he senses danger, instead of running or fighting, buries his head in the loose sand. He neglects doing the things that make him safe. A conscript army would give us no more security than sand does the ostrich.

Almost every country Hitler overran had peacetime conscription. France had a larger army than did Germany. France, General Devine, suffered from the ostrich complex when, in the name of national security, she bankrupted herself on peacetime conscription and the Maginot line. She neglected every defense while she wasted her strength on a conscript army.

If we adopt universal military training, I'm afraid we will be like France and the ostrich. And there is no evidence now to support that feeling. America will spend only too much for preparedness. Money

spent for universal military training will not be spent for measures better suited to defense in modern warfare.

Even tonight, Major Eliot, as you and I talk peacetime conscription on America's Town Meeting of the Air, you know we are neglecting the steps which are really necessary in case of attack. As we talk conscription, we could be doing more to show the world that America is determined to make the United Nations Organization work. Instead, we are scrapping the whole program for world trade.

We are taking unilateral action all over the world. We are neglecting the battle for world cooperation. But you say, General Devine, our efforts at world cooperation are failing because we lack military strength. Does any potential enemy have the atom bomb? Who exceeds us in aircraft or in naval vessels? Which nation has our productive power? Who could stand against us? Where have we failed to back our commitments? World cooperation may not be succeeding, but it is not for lack of military strength on our part.

Instead of concentrating now on trying to create a tremendous army of poorly trained conscripts, we should be moving the productive power of Detroit to a thousand small towns. We should be building a network of super highways

which would make possible the evacuation of every large city over night. Our great strength lies in our productive power.

Aluminum from T. V. A. in Bonneville did much to win the war. We should be using a part of the three billions conscription would cost us each year to build hydroelectric plants on every stream in the nation. We should be increasing our productive capacity by training our young people in the trades and skills of industry. We should be modernizing our army. Our military schools should even now be being made into vast research plants.

From the standpoint of the boy involved, conscription is bad. It will deprive him of a year of his life. It will tempt him to follow the leader, as the German youth followed Hitler. It is destructive of democracy.

I disagree with General Devine when he says that forced military training builds character. But suppose it did—I would still oppose it. American parents still prefer to build the character of their children in their homes. And American parents still don't want the character-building of their children to be done by the army, by the state, or anyone else. (*Applause.*)

Universal military training affords no security in the world of the atom bomb. Its adoption will cause us to neglect steps which

will afford us some real degree of military security. The way security lies through international co-operation, but the resources and man power we must use for military purposes now should be spent for the machines and technique of the warfare of today and not for the materiel and methods of the warfare of the days of Napoleon. (*Applause.*)

Moderator Denny:

Thank you, Judge Erickson, and congratulations to all four of you gentlemen for giving us the benefit of all of the pertinent and major arguments in this issue tonight.

Now, General Devine, will you and Judge Erickson step up here around the microphone while Norman Thomas and Major Eliot join us in New York for a brief discussion, before taking the question from this audience here in Salt Lake City.

Major Eliot, do you have a question or comment for either of the speakers here?

Major Eliot: Yes, I'd like to ask a question. Judge Erickson has said that universal military training has no military value. But such men as General Eisenhower, General Bradley, General Spaatz, General Arnold, Admiral Nimitz, Admiral Halsey, who gave us victory in the war we just won, are all very strongly in favor of universal training and say that it has great military value.

According to Judge Erickson these gentlemen are ostriches hiding their heads in the sand, and according to Mr. Thomas they are camels sticking their noses under tent flaps. But I would like to know, Judge Erickson, how it is that these gentlemen with their vast experience, and at the end of their careers, when they have no glory to gain, say that military training has great value, while you, Judge Erickson, say it has none.

Judge Erickson: Major Eliot, the G. I.'s in the service used to speak of pulling the rank, and it seems to me that you may have pulled a little rank on me here when you bring out all of these generals.

If I said there was absolutely no value in universal military training, that, perhaps, was an overstatement; but I do say that it has relatively little value. The proposed Universal Military Training will cost three billions a year. That three billions represents the surplus this year in our national treasury. That will be taken away. Now, for every penny you spend for universal military training, there will be one penny less for some of the other means which I consider and a great many military experts consider—and I am not a military expert—imperative.

Mr. Denny: Thank you. **Mr. Thomas:**

Mr. Thomas: I think General Devine perhaps misunderstood me. I am not proposing universal disarmament like the Kellogg Briand pact, but only under effective controls. I am not proposing unilateral disarmament, but I am saying that unless America makes an appeal, we will not clarify issues or line up people, and that if we first create the vested interests of rank and profit by this enactment of conscription, the chance of our making the necessary appeal will be very small. Argue it, please, on that basis.

Now General Devine, I'd like to ask you a couple of questions about Fort Knox. I hear that you have done a remarkable job there on which all of us would congratulate you, but frankly, hasn't the War Department made it part of its propaganda? It has spent lots of money on propaganda. Am I right in thinking that you had 560 officers and men to train 664 trainees? Rather expensive.

Am I right in understanding that some of your beautiful pictures—like the picture of that trainee at prayer on Easter—was staged by a publicity expert who spent eight hours looking for the church, the girls, the trainees, and the rest?

I think there is a lot of propaganda about that and I don't think we'll judge conscription by what you did at Fort Knox. And, incidentally, the issue isn't the

character of Fort Knox. It is what conscription has done to the nations that tried it and what it has not done to avert war.

Mr. Denny: Let's take the questions one at a time, Mr. Thomas, because the audience here reacted rather loudly to your first comment, and General Devine did not get the second one, so let's take the first one. He got the first one, about there being 560 officers to train 600 men.

Mr. Thomas: I beg your pardon. I want to get it straight—560 officers and enlisted men.

Mr. Denny: 560 officers and enlisted men to train 600 men. Is that part of the propaganda of the War Department, according to Mr. Thomas?

General Devine: The figures are not quite right, but this is the reason why they are so large and it is a perfectly logical reason. In this little battalion at Fort Knox we have every branch of the army. We have infantry, artillery, tanks, medical corps, ordnance, quartermaster, signal corps—what have I forgotten? We have got them all—twelve branches.

In order to train them, we have to have equipment. We have 40 tankers, for example—no, 80 tankers. You've got to have tanks to train them. We have 40 signal corps men. You've got to have signal equipment to train them, and somebody has to maintain the equipment; and we don't have

enough people to maintain the equipment we have.

You can go down to the motor parts and get your car fixed; you can take a bath, or get your shoes repaired, or anything else. We can do anything that the army does. People have to maintain the equipment.

Now, the officers and men who do the actual training in the companies, the ones who exert the greatest influence on the trainees are in the exact same proportion as they would be in a national program. (*Applause.*)

Mr. Denny: We lost your second question about the Easter service, Mr. Thomas.

Mr. Thomas: I just wanted to know whether the story is true that the publicity expert at Fort Knox spent at least eight hours staging a nice picture about the young trainee at prayer in church. It took that long to get the Easter lilies and the right girls and the trainees, and so on, together. I think that is a propaganda approach—not General Devine's fault, but the War Department's—and I think this Fort Knox business has been played up out of proportion in order to put on something very different.

General Devine: The picture of this specific instance was a very beautiful picture—one of the finest Easter pictures I have ever seen.

May I say that the man who

picture appeared in that photograph actually went to that church on Easter Sunday morning, and any professional photographer will agree that if you are going to get a good picture you'll have to frame it. You can't take a picture on Easter Sunday morning and have it in the Easter papers. That's a trivial matter. Maybe our public relations officer was a little too ambitious, but he did get a good picture.

Mr. Thomas: I say that this sort of thing is very expensive in the aggregate—it is at the taxpayer's expense—in order to put over something very different than has been possible, at this specially equipped Fort Knox place.

And this is no guarantee that this would prevent war. It never did for France. It never did for the other nations.

Major Eliot: Well, the example of France, Mr. Thomas, is not a very good one, because every nation in Europe, when France went down, had universal training. The balance was even on that. France went down for quite other reasons.

Mr. Thomas: Perhaps, but it shows how useless universal military training is in guaranteeing victory. We are told that we got into war because of our weakness, but yet every nation except ourselves and the English had universal military training. Evidently

there were other reasons for their going down, and for our living.

Major Eliot: But it is well known that the decision of the Japanese general staff to attack us in the Pacific in 1941 and the decision of the Germans to undertake unrestricted submarine warfare in 1917, were both based on careful calculations of the military weakness of the United States. Those are facts. They're not suppositions.

Mr. Thomas: I'd like to argue that about Japan.

Mr. Denny: Now, let's give General Devine an opportunity to talk on your general charge, Mr. Thomas, that Fort Knox is a propaganda agency of the army.

General Devine: The Fort Knox experiment is something new because it is designed to present a true picture of universal military training. Everything that has been done there has been honest. We have never concealed anything from anyone. We've had hard-boiled newspaper reporters there by the score.

Now, we have been successful—and even Mr. Thomas admits we have been successful—because we have conditions which have never before existed in the army. The army has never had them. We've had a true cross section of the youth of the United States at the age of 18. They are all the same age. They react the same. They respond the same. We have

demonstrated that we knew how to take those boys and handle them. What we have done there can be duplicated on a larger scale, but not suddenly. It would have to be gradual.

Mr. Denny: Thank you very much, General Devine, Mr. Thomas, Major Eliot, and Judge Erickson. Here is a message that I am sure you will be interested in.

Announcer: In tomorrow's issue of the New York *Herald Tribune* you will find an excellent four-

column summary of tonight's Town Meeting. The *Herald Tribune* does this each week as a public service to a better informed America.

During the next two and a half months your Town Meeting will originate in Seattle, Vancouver, San Francisco, Santa Barbara, Phoenix, Los Angeles, San Diego, Santa Fe, Albuquerque, Dallas and Kansas City, returning to Town Hall, New York, October 1.

And now the question period.

QUESTIONS, PLEASE!

Mr. Denny: Once again we have reached the point in our Town Meeting when you in the audience have a chance to win a \$210 set of *Encyclopedia Americana*. If our judges pick your question as best for bringing out new facts and increasing understanding of tonight's question, and if you limit your question to 25 words or less, a 30-volume set of the *Encyclopedia Americana* will be on the way to you tomorrow. So you know the simple rules. Make your questions brief and to the point.

(Because of technical difficulties, the Town Meeting of the Air program was interrupted for a short period and the question from the audience directed to Judge Erickson was not recorded.)

Judge Erickson. . . . they were taken from civilian life. They were taken from the professions, the

schools, and from everywhere. You have the organized Officers' Reserve. We have the National Guard. We have a number of other places from which these leaders will come. They will not come from boys of the age of 18 who have spent six months in a camp, even a good one like Fort Knott, and another six months in some other place. Leaders don't come from that kind of training for modern warfare.

Man: Mr. Thomas, If American proposed universal disarmament with effective controls and Russia would not conform, would you then be willing to accept compulsory military training in America?

Mr. Thomas: (First part of Thomas's answer indistinguishable.) . . . first get the response of the peoples of the world to universal disarmament. My point

that if we *first* take universal military training we will create the kind of psychology and vested interests that make it almost impossible for us to make the one appeal on which the ultimate peace of the world will depend.

Mr. Denny: Thank you. The gentleman in the center here.

Man: Major Eliot, would not an equal amount of money and effort, dedicated to greater industrial efficiency, be better insurance than universal military training?

Major Eliot: It is not a question of either, or. It is a question, as the Compton Report made very clear, of universal training as a part—an essential part, an interdependent part—of a well regulated program of military preparedness and a program for the national security. It isn't a question of whether this would be better than that. It's a question of whether universal training forms a proper part of a national security program.

Mr. Thomas: Major Eliot, may I break in just to say this? Unfortunately it is a question of choice. We aren't so rich that we can implement the Marshall Plan, and do all the things we ought to make democracy work, and even build up proper military defense, and let ourselves in for the almost unlimited expense that ultimately universal military training—which is only a beginning—will entail.

Major Eliot: Well, Mr. Thomas,

I have just to say this. I am very much in favor of the Marshall Plan, as you know if you've read everything I've written on the subject. When General Marshall—Secretary of State Marshall—goes down to the Congress and says that he doesn't have enough money for his Plan, and that he doesn't want universal military training, which so far he has supported, then I will go along with you. I think he is the best spokesman for the Marshall Plan, and I think he knows whether universal training will help him to get it and to carry out the duties of the State Department better or not.

Mr. Thomas: I respect Secretary Marshall, but I don't think we ought to argue this on a basis of appeal to authority.

Mr. Denny: All right, thank you. Now the gentleman there on the front row.

Man: General Devine. How would the soldiers trained under the Universal Military Training program serve in the event of an atomic war?

General Devine: In an atomic war, it would be absolutely essential that a sound program of universal protection be developed in the country, so that in every area trained citizens would be ready to restore order, to diminish chaos, to get public utilities functioning again. An atomic war would increase the necessity for military

training for all citizens in this country. (*Applause.*)

Mr. Denny: Thank you. We'll take that beautiful blonde in the balcony. Yes?

Lady: My question is directed to Major General Eliot.

Mr. Denny: Major General! (*Laughter.*) That's good.

Lady: Will universal military training provide adequate defense against an atomic war?

Mr. Denny: That's almost the same question, but Major Eliot?

Major Eliot: Well, I can only say that I agree very much with General Devine that in an atomic war we would need trained man power to a far greater extent than we ever had before. I think perhaps I might be interceded to quote from the British military historian, Captain Cyril Falls, who spoke the other day of the absurd theory that the atomic bomb makes all forces useless.

"If that theory were carried to its logical conclusion," said Captain Falls, "a nation having atomic bombs could disband its armed forces altogether; but if it did, it might find itself suddenly invaded, its bombs taken from it, and its plants smashed. Given two nations having atomic bombs, one armed and one not, the armed nation would have all the advantages."

Mr. Denny: Thank you. Now, we'll try a brunette in the yellow dress.

Lady: I'm directing my ques-

tion to General Devine. Would not a more democratic, better-paid, more efficient army, causing an increase in enlistments, be a better answer to maintaining our military strength? (*Applause.*)

General Devine: If we pay them enough? It would cost quite a lot—about eight times as much. Universal Military Training, according to Secretary Patterson's estimate.

Man: I'm directing my question to Judge Erickson. Could we be better prepared to have a worldwide military army, composed of a unit force of all nations, instead of domestic compulsory training?

Major Erickson: There can be no question but that what you are asking for, an international police force, along the United Nations line, would be better. Of course there can be no question of that. That's the objective we should have, and that's what we should be working for.

Tonight, as I understand the question, we are just considering it under the present situation and from a purely military standpoint and looking at it from a nationalistic viewpoint alone—what's best for the United States.

I say what's best for the United States, first, is to make world co-operation work. Secondly, when we do spend our money on military matters, military affairs, military products, spend it efficiently, spend it wisely; and

aying, thirdly, that if we spend
t for compulsory military train-
ng, we won't spend it for means
that are designed to meet the prob-
ems of modern warfare. And
that statement is backed up by the
report of the Compton Commis-
ion, of which you've heard so
much.

They didn't come out with
an unqualified support of Uni-
versal Military Training. Here's
what they said. They said what I'm
aying tonight: "If the introduction
of universal training should have
an indirect effect of weakening,
rather than strengthening, the
other elements of our national
security, then our Commission is
of the firm opinion that the adop-
tion of Universal Military Train-
ing would be a mistake, and would
diminish rather than increase our
national security." And that's what
they say it would do. (*Applause.*)

Mr. Denny: Now we have a
question from New York and I'll
direct it to General Devine. "Will
not any proposed universal train-
ing wreck the careers of thousands
of hopeful 4-H farmer boys and
thus injure the nation's progres-
sive farming?"

General Devine: "Wreck the
careers" is a pretty broad term.
The plan as it is now written
requires six months of intensive
training in a camp, and to that
extent it is an interruption of a
career or of an education. Perhaps
10 per cent of the boys at that age

will not have either a career or an
education interrupted. As far as
the education is concerned, the
six-months' training period is ac-
commodated by a slight change in
the senior year in high school, the
freshman year in college.

The boys can go to the military
training camp in the summer.
Farmer boys who work in the
summer can do theirs in the second
period, from October to April.
That's the time they can best be
spared from the farm, but it *does*
mean six months in camp.

Mr. Denny: Thank you. Judge
Erickson has a comment on that.

Judge Erickson: General Devine,
I'd like to ask you a question in
connection with Fort Knox. As I
understand it, all of those boys
who are down there have volun-
tarily gone into the service. They're
enlistees, not conscripts. Now,
would you get the same results
with a million, or a million and a
half, or two million American
boys, year in and year out, who are
forced unwillingly into camps—
spread a thousand of them all over
the United States—under discipline
and training, perhaps somewhat
different than you can give at Fort
Knox where you say, frankly, that
you are conducting an experiment?
(*Applause.*)

General Devine: The boys at
Fort Knox are volunteers, but not
for the unit at Fort Knox. They
are volunteers for the Regular
Army and are Regular Army sol-

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diers. How they compare culturally, socially, with similar groups of other boys I am not sure. I have no fear about any resistance on the part of our young men to the kind of thing we give at Fort Knox.

They like it. Military training offers the kind of things that young men like to do. They like to learn how to shoot. They like the camp. (*Laughter.*) You have never seen the kind of training that we give. As I said before, this combination of conditions has never existed before. We have never had a cross-section of 18-year-old boys together with the opportunities of training for six months. Come to Fort Knox and we will show you.

Mr. Thomas: I challenge General Devine with this statement. (*Mr. Thomas' first remarks were indistinguishable over voice of questioner in audience.*) This program will give us more power to send our boys around the world.

Mr. Denny: Thank you. Now the gentleman here. Will you repeat your question?

Man: Mr. Thomas, don't the other nations of the world respect actual military force more than potential military force?

Mr. Thomas: It's hard to say what they respect in the present confusion. Russia doesn't even seem to respect our monopoly of atomic bombs. What I'm arguing for is another approach—an appeal

to the world, to the people, to off the backs of starving folks a burden that costs more than food they eat in many nations.

And until that appeal has been made, we have no right to go on in the old, old ways which have led only to ruin. The beginning of conscription is never the end. The laws that make it possible to conscript boys in peacetime make labor conscription possible some day.

Mr. Denny: Thank you very much, Mr. Norman Thomas, gentlemen. Now while speakers prepare their summaries for tonight's question, here's a message of interest to you.

Announcer: On our travels about the country, people keep asking the question, "What is this Town Hall to which you refer? Isn't Town Hall Meeting just another radio program produced in a studio that we call Town Hall?"

No, Town Hall is an educational institution established in 1894. When you are in New York you may visit the Town Hall Building at 123 West 43rd Street, just off Times Square. Town Hall conducts the oldest lecture program in the country, as well as a new program of short courses designed for adults.

Town Hall is also the busiest concert hall in America. Town Hall and the American Broadcasting Company, then a part of NBC, began producing America's Town

Meeting twelve years ago on May 10, 1935.

Mr. Norman Thomas, now a member of Town Hall's Board of Trustees, was one of the speakers in that first program. For further information about Town Hall, address the Secretary, Town Hall, 125 West 18th Street, New York 18, New York. Now for the summaries of tonight's discussion, here is Mr. Denny.

Mr. Denny: And now may we hear first the summary by Mr. Norman Thomas.

Mr. Thomas: In the name of security, dear to us all, the War Department, at great expense of taxpayers' money, is trying to propagandize us into an enormously expensive conscription, out of which may someday flower drafts of women and labor.

Congress closes hearings with major farm, labor, and church groups unheard. The peoples of the world are told that ten billions of American appropriations, a monopoly of atomic bombs, the largest navy and the best air force in the world, still leave us with a weakness that only conscription, which never saved any other nation, can cure. The inevitable result will be to make war more likely with no comparable increase in national security.

We need our money and brains for better things. Our next step should be not the conscription of our sons, but an appeal to the nations for universal disarmament

under effective international control. To rush into this conscription now will be at the price of our last great hope.

Mr. Denny: Thank you, Mr. Thomas. Major George Fielding Eliot, may we have your final word?

Major Eliot: I wonder if Mr. Thomas really thinks that President Truman and Secretary Marshall and their aides are sitting down there in Washington wickedly plotting a bloodbath for their fellow countrymen.

That is not, as Mr. Thomas said, the basis tacitly accepted in Washington at all. I don't think the American people are going to start a war, and I think Russia will be less likely to start a war if we are well prepared. And I am sure that if Russia does start a war, she will be less likely to win it, if we are well prepared.

As for the other fallacy, which our learned opponents put forth, that man power is no longer important in the mechanized wars of today and the future, that's common enough among those who have made no real study of military affairs. Just yesterday, a professor testifying against Universal Military Training before a committee of the House said that a few scientists invented radar, and thus defeated the German air force. But it isn't really like that.

Mr. Denny: Thank you very much, George Fielding Eliot, Nor-

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man Thomas, Judge Erickson, General Devine, for your counsel on tonight's urgent problem. It is one on which every American citizen can and should express his opinion. The decision is being made now by the American people.

You have heard both sides. Now we suggest that you talk it over, think it over, then write to your Congressman. But be sure to tell him that you have heard both sides on America's Town Meeting of the Air.

And remember, if you want a copy of tonight's discussion, send ten cents to Town Hall, New York 18, New York, and a bulletin will be sent to you.

Next week, when our program originates in Seattle, Washington, our subject will be, "Can We Have an Effective World Organization Without Russia?" Our speakers will be Clarence Streit, President of Federal Union, Inc.; Stephen

Chadwick, Seattle attorney; Dr. Peter H. Odegard, President Reed College, Portland; and Charles R. Savage, business man and labor consultant.

Now a local committee judges has awarded a set of *Encyclopedia Americana* to an unknown man, who I hope will give us his name after the program, for the question, "How would soldiers trained under the Universal Military Training program serve in the event of an atomic war?" Congratulations, sir.

And thanks to other members of the audience for their interesting questions; to our hosts, the University of Utah, the Centennial Commission, and Station KUTV and our sincere good wishes to the Mormon people on the occasion of their 100th anniversary. I plan now to be with us next week and every week, at the sound of the crier's bell.